

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Jersey Bridge

other names/site number Highway 49 Bridge

DRAFT

2. Location

street & number Carrying State Route 49 from Main to Commercial Streets

city or town Downieville

state California code CA county Sierra code 091 zip code 95936

☐
☐

not for publication

vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** ___ **statewide** ___ **local**

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | public - Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Federal |

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		district
		site
1	0	structure
		object
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Historic Bridges of California MPS

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation: Road related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Transportation: Road related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Single lane, steel, rigid-connected polygonal

Warren pony truss steel span.

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: _____

walls: _____

roof: _____

other: Steel structure

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Jersey bridge, built in 1938 across the Downie River, is a rare surviving example of one lane, steel, rigid-connected polygonal warren pony truss span. Designed to carry local traffic connecting Main and Commerical Streets, the single lane bridge has also carried route 49 on its one lane (12 foot, 6 inch) roadway since built in 1938.

Narrative Description

This bridge is located in the heart of this gold rush community and remains a symbol of this community that straddles two rivers. The bridge has maintained a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The bridge just surpassed a century of service, is unchanged, and rare. It also makes a critical contribution to the rural atmosphere of Downieville.

One of four historic bridge crossings in Downieville, the Jersey Bridge has a prominent place in the community's history. Named for connecting the downtown area with Jersey Flat, the bridge along with nearby Durgan Bridge are the most important to both early commerce and continuing to today. A 1851 lithograph shows the first Jersey Bridge in place. Destroyed by flood in 1852, destroyed by fire in 1858, seriously damaged by flood in 1861, collapsed by weight in 1875, and destroyed by flood in 1937, an event that also destroyed the nearby Durgan Bridge as well as a concrete arch bridge built by the state of California in 1935 to carry state route 49, a bridge that lasted just 18 months.

This current Jersey bridge was designed by county surveyor George F. Taylor, and built by Judson Pacific Company. The bridge is a one lane, steel, rigid-connected polygonal warren pony truss span measuring 120 feet long. With the highway 49 bridge never replaced, the current Jersey Bridge has carried state route 49 on its one lane (12 foot, 6 inch) roadway since built in 1938.

The Warren truss was patented in 1848 by its designers and consists of longitudinal members joined only by angled cross-members, forming alternately inverted equilateral triangle shaped spaces along its length, ensuring that no individual strut, beam, or tie is subject to bending or straining forces, but only to tension or compression. Loads on the diagonals alternate between compression and tension (approaching the center), with no vertical elements, while elements near the center must support both tension and compression in response to live loads. This configuration combines strength with economy of materials and can therefore be relatively light.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community planning and development

Period of Significance

1938

Significant Dates

1851 first bridge crossing

1852, 1858, 1861, 1875 bridge replaced

1938 existing bridge built

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Judson Pacific Company

Designed by county engineer George Taylor

Period of Significance (justification)

Bridge continues to represent the era in which it was built, the 1930s. It is an extremely rare example of a single lane bridge carrying the traffic of a contemporary state highway.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Since the establishment of this community in 1848, bridges were to be important infrastructure to this community due to the nature of the geography of where Downieville is located. As gold brought settlers to the area, rivers were the source of that precious metal and there was an early interest on the part of settlers to live near those waterways. Additionally, little flat ground was to be found in the area adjacent the confluence of the North Yuba and Downie Rivers, forcing the location of any community that developed to be adjacent both rivers. The community first known as "The Fork's" soon became Downieville, after Scottish born and early settler William Downie. As the community developed on different 'flats' adjacent each side of each rivers, Zumwalt, Durgan, Jersey, and Washington District, a number of bridges were early built and have been maintained (built, destroyed, rebuilt) since that time.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Community planning and development

Like many communities, the geography surrounding the community of Downieville would be tied closely to its founding, development, and continued existence. Situated at the confluence of two deep mountain canyons carrying two significant rivers, the community was forced to straddle these rivers to exist in this location of heavy gold deposits. Such a location would require the early building of two bridges in order for the community to exist and two more were early viewed as likewise for the community that developed. In each instance, a single lane bridge was viewed as all that was necessary to supply the community with its necessary traffic system. While each bridge has been replaced any number of times due to flood, fire, or collapse, in each instance the successor bridges that now date from between 1910 and 1938 continue to represent the type, style, design, and capacity of bridges that have served this community for 161 years.

These bridges are today unique as they limit this community, like the geography that surrounds it, to a rural and slow pace reflected in 18th century California. While no longer wooden surfaced, these one lane structures in a community with no traffic lights, limit traffic to a certain pace not seen in any other California community. Singularly unique, the Jersey Bridge carries a state highway in a single lane configuration, the only such point for the entire length of state highway 49 through California's gold country from Oakhurst, Mariposa County to Vinton, Plumas County, forcing north bound traffic to stand and wait while south bound traffic passes, and visa versa.

Downieville's economy has shifted from its historic resource based origins of gold mining and timber production to that of tourism today. Both recreational and historic tourism is the town's draw. Camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, and mountain biking are all pursuits undertaken in this community surrounded by public lands of the Tahoe National Forest. With roots dating to 1848, Downieville remains much of its gold rush charm and is a draw due to its isolation, scenic beauty, and dramatic setting. A number of buildings in town date to the 1850s including that housing a local history museum. And the survival of these four one lane bridges add to the unique ambiance of this community that straddles the Yuba and Downie Rivers. From National Geographic's "Guide to Small Town Escapes", in which Downieville is one of four towns representing California (along with Catalina, Ojai, and Mendocino), Geoffrey O'Gara writes of Downieville as "A trestle bridge spans the Downie River just above its junction with the North Yuba River, and there, if you any aspiration to continue into Northern California's high country, you must wait your turn, because the bridge is only wide enough for one lane of traffic. The narrow bridge provides one assurance that Downieville will likely be no more than the very small town it's always been. There is only a small level area in the vicinity where the rivers join, and the rest of the town anchors precariously on steep, forested canyon walls." This quote was written for the Jersey Bridge, yet describes all four surviving one lane bridges in Downieville, believed to be the only community in the state with such a period transportation system.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

James J. Sinnott's, Downieville, Gold town on the Yuba, 1972

James J. Sinnott's, A General History of Sierra County, 1978

National Geographic, "Guide to Small Town Escapes"

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☒ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property One (1)

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 10 686601 4381151
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Bridge structure spanning the Downie River and connecting Main Street and Commerical Streets, Downieville, Sierra County, California.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Limited to bridge structure

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lee Adams, Sierra County Supervisor, District One

organization County of Sierra

date 2 February 2012

street & number PO Drawer D

telephone 530.289.3295

city or town Downieville

state CA

95936

e-mail hangman@sierracounty.ws

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Jersey Bridge

City or Vicinity: Downieville

County: Sierra

State: CA

Photographer: Lee Adams

Date Photographed: 3/1/11 – 7/1/11

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 5.

1. Jersey Bridge looking east with a vehicle mid span.
2. Jersey Bridge builder's plate reading 'Judson Pacific Co, San Francisco, 1938
3. Jersey Bridge close up of bridge structure.
4. Jersey Bridge view from downstream showing side view of bridge.
5. Jersey Bridge side view close up.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name County of Sierra (Tim H. Beals, Director of Transportation)

street & number PO Box 98 telephone 530.289.3201

city or town Downieville state CA 95936

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.